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ABSTRACT

This project located in Glasgow, Scotland, is concerned with the use of distance teaching for a non-formal community education program that is a component of a social change strategy to combat poverty. The study shows that the use of distance learning courses in non-formal community education is successful in attracting, at a reasonable cost per student, many who are economically and educationally disadvantaged. Participation in these courses leads to improvements in morale, strengthened social networks, better child care and nutritional habits, and further educational opportunities. Employment and community activities were also positively affected by participation. It appears that these courses are successful in contributing to the objectives of the social strategy for change. (17 references) (DB)

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Pan Commonwealth Meeting

Distance teaching for non-formal education

Nairobi 6 - 9 June 1990

Case Study: A Distance Education contribution to a Social Strategy to combat poverty: Open University Community Education Courses in Glasgow

N C Farnes

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A Distance Education contribution to a Social Strategy to combat poverty: Open University Community Education Courses in Glasgow

N C Farnes

Background Issues

This project concerns the use of distance teaching for a non-formal community education programme which is a component of a social strategy to combat poverty. Adult education is rarely used in this way in Britain, however in developing countries it frequently features as part of national development plans. In Asia, Latin America, and Africa large adult education projects have tackled literacy and promoted health and economic development (UNESCO, 1976; Fordham, 1980; Duke, 1985). The general conclusions from this experience is that the issue is no longer whether adult education can be beneficial but 'under what circumstances, at what times and by what means' it can contribute (Duke 1985: 213). Circumstances which contribute to the success of an adult education programme include the necessary political will and support from central and local government, its timing coinciding with general improvements and increasing opportunities, and the programme being part of a wider strategy and linked to other development initiatives. Adult education generally is more likely to contribute to change if there is a *vertical* alignment of the interests of government, the implementing body and the students as well as *horizontal* linkages between educational and other development agencies (Farnes, 1990). Distance teaching often involves a variety of agencies in: initiating, funding, preparing and delivering learning materials, recruiting and supporting students - and is especially likely to depend on similar circumstances for its success in non-formal education.

In general courses of this kind might help students and whether or not this is at the expense of others depends on the context and whether this provides increasing or declining opportunities (ie. opportunity structure). For example, participation could take place against a background of increasing poverty or rising prosperity. Where employment opportunities are declining then in as far as community education helps students to get jobs, this could be in competition with non-students and while benefiting the students it may not add to the welfare of the community. However, employment is only one area of life in which opportunities may increase or decrease, other areas include community activities, social life, education, health, childcare and so on. If opportunities are increasing or can be made to increase then students may be able to take these up without preventing other people from doing so. Also there are ways in which individuals can take up activities, which increase options for others, such as starting up a childcare scheme or a business, or campaigning for community resources and facilities.

Courses may only attract those who have resources and for whom opportunities exist, that is, people not at the bottom of the opportunity structure. Duke (1987: 327) points out that it may be necessary to concentrate on those situations 'where there is room for change' and presumably on those individuals who are in a position to make changes or take advantage of change. Resources and needed to participate in education

- not least time and attention - and those for whom the business of survival demands all these are unlikely to be involved or if they do participate they may not have the resources to take advantage of opportunities arising from education. The poorest of the poor are more likely to need relief and material support rather than education.

Where community education is a component of a social strategy to combat poverty will those participating be relatively well off and have the resources to become involved; and will involvement only be helpful for those with the wherewithal to benefit? Or does the welfare state and local services provide a sufficient base for even the most disadvantaged to participate and to take up the limited options available? Can community education help people to take action which increases the options for others and contributes to community development?

The community, those participating and who benefit might be represented by the figure below:

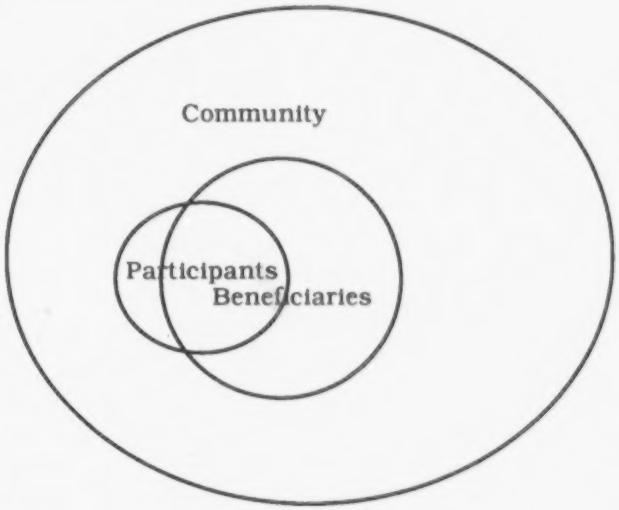

Fig 1. Hypothetical overlap between participants and beneficiaries of community education

The questions regard the characteristics and circumstances of those who participate and who benefit and whether what students do a result of participation increases (or reduces) opportunities for others.

Geographical and social context

This project is located in Glasgow the largest city in Scotland and the third largest in the UK with a population of three quarters of a million people and is the centre of Strathclyde Region which is the largest local authority in Western Europe. Local government was reorganised in 1975 and shortly afterwards the Regional Council launched its social strategy to combat poverty through community participation and positive discrimination. The Social Strategy aimed to strengthen the vertical and horizontal links between policy levels. Vertically by attempting to 'bring pressure on central government... to deal with the problems of poverty' through to the 'reactivation of community spirit'; and horizontally by 'ensuring that the public services are relevant... readily accessible, well coordinated and sensibly administered (SRC, 1976: 10).

The introduction of the social strategy coincided with rising unemployment as manufacturing industries declined and a major economic recession began. During the '80's the recession peaked with the male unemployment rate for

the city reaching 25% and in many areas there were as many as 40% of men out of work. At the same time there has been a massive rise in marital breakdown and single parenthood which for women is usually associated with poverty. In 1987 an average of 30% of all households with children were currently headed by lone parents in Glasgow. In addition and particularly amongst the unskilled there is poor health, high infant mortality, high levels of stress related illness, poor diet and heavy smoking especially by women.

British Open University and its Community Education Programme

In 1969 the British Open University was established by the government to provide part-time education for adults through distance teaching. From the outset priority was given to developing an undergraduate degree programme open to adults without entry qualifications. The early success of the innovative distance teaching system meant that attention could be given to wider educational objectives, and work was begun on a community education programme. This involves developing short courses aimed at meeting *the learning needs of adults in their parent, health, consumer, employment and community/citizen roles in the context of their family, community and workplaces at various stages in their lives and in relation to societal changes* (Farnes, 1984). The courses consist of multi-media distance learning materials (see below) and although no group support is provided by the university external agencies are encouraged to organise local groups.

The undergraduate programme at the Open University is funded from central government but the community education programme has to raise separate funds mainly from public bodies, in particular the Health Education Council which was responsible for promoting health education in England and Wales, and the Scottish Heath Education Group in Scotland (for reviews of this work see Calder and Farnes, 1982; Farnes et al, 1986). The TV programmes are produced by the BBC with whom the Open University has a ongoing contract and a major studio on site. Initially the TV programmes were transmitted twice over a two periods of eight weeks each year, and later were distributed on video cassettes. The courses are publicly advertised and offered nationally for a fee and are also available singly or in bulk to agencies who can purchase on behalf of learners or clients with whom they were working.

Collaboration between the OU and the Regional Council

In the late '70's copies of the courses were purchased by isolated community development projects working in Glasgow and this experience led to a joint initiative by the Education and Social Work Departments in this Strathclyde Region who proposed a collaborative scheme with the Open University as part of the Social Strategy. This scheme was launched in 1981 and since then the numbers of students taking the courses has gradually increased. The main agency responsible for delivery of the courses and for providing group leaders is the Community Education Service in Glasgow. It relies on the regular staff in community centres, nursery, primary and secondary schools to run groups in addition to their other duties, as well as project staff and staff employed full or part time by the Service. The courses are purchased from the Open University by agencies in Glasgow and provided free of charge to the students.

The factors giving rise to the ready acceptance of the Open University Community Education courses in Glasgow and which led to the establishment of the collaborative scheme include:

1) the overlap between the **objectives** of the courses and the Social Strategy;
2) the courses provided a **means** for tackling the community development objectives of the Social Strategy;
3) the availability of external **funding** for the courses from the Scottish Health Education Group;
4) other funding particularly for the **staff** involved in setting up and running the groups came from central government Urban Aid projects as did funding for **buildings** - nursery schools, parents rooms in schools, community centres;
5) Central government funding meant that there were **not large demands** made on mainline local authority budgets;
6) there was strong **support** from the Director of Social Work, who was himself an OU undergraduate and from the Chairman of the Regional Council's Education Committee who was also a member of the OU Council;
7) OU Regional and central staff **support** for the use of the courses in Glasgow which brought in financial resources needed for what had to be a self-financing programme.

Policy integration between agencies

The extent of integration between the policy on the use of the Open University courses in Glasgow, Open University policies, central government policies and the Social Strategy can be assessed by tracing the links between and across agencies. The diagram below shows the policy links between the main agencies.

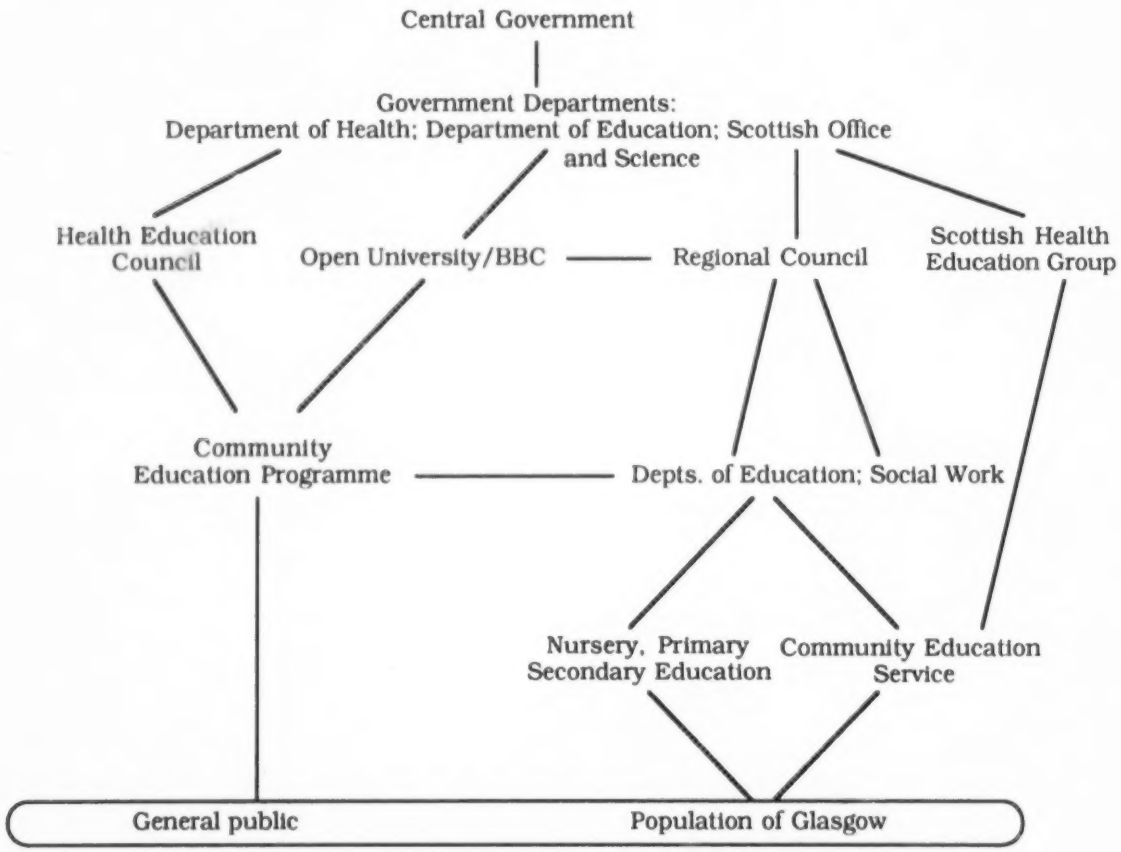

Fig 2. Policy links between the main agencies

In terms of vertical integration central government support came through the Scottish Office and included the Urban Aid programme for staff and

premises for community development activities. As semi-autonomous government agencies the Health Education Council and Scottish Health Education Group provided funding for the development and purchase of courses. As part of the Social Strategy the Education and Social Work Departments were provided with extra staff for nursery and other schools; for community education and development; and social work; also project staff came in to these Departments through Urban Aid (Yates, 1984: 38). Many of these staff were involved in promoting and supporting the use of the courses. Outside the remit of the Regional Council, the Health Boards as part of their policy for preventative work provide staff some of whom were involved in using the courses in the communities.

Central government's policies regarding the Open University did not include providing funding for the Community Education programme, which had to come mainly from the Health Education Council, itself funded by government but relatively independent regarding policy (Sutherland, 1987). Open University policy concerning collaboration, particularly in Scotland, was reinforced by a high level committee with external membership on Continuing Education (Venables, 1976).

The horizontal coordination of policy between agencies in Glasgow - Education, Social Work and Health has been attempted at a level of tackling deprivation and community regeneration generally but not at the level of specific programme for the cross-agency use of the courses. The use of the courses by the Community Education Service in Glasgow has remained a relatively self contained programme and does not appear to be closely integrated with other work or to the diverse adult and further educational provision. Links between the use of the courses and other community education, further education, nursery education and schools, pre-fives, social work, community development, health and so on - certainly exist, but detailed and coherent policies and practices in which the courses serve a particular role within education and other agencies work are lacking.

This analysis shows the complexity of a multi-agency programme and the difficulties of policy coordination when using distance education in a community education programme which is a component of a social strategy.

Aims and content of the courses

The main distance learning courses offered in Glasgow deal with parent and health education (for a full description of the content see Open Opportunities, 1990). Their titles are:

The First Years of Life
The PreSchool Child
Childhood 5-10
Parents and Teenagers
Health Choices
Healthy Eating

The general aims of the courses are for students to:

1) value their own experience and the experience of others and to facilitate dialogue between learners and others.
2) make personal and collective decisions based on their own experience, values, resources and information; and to implement changes.
3) take action individually and collectively to improve the services and facilities in their own communities.

Typical components of a course include:
8 x 32 page full colour, magazine-style booklets consisting of 2-4 page topics
4 x 25 minute TV programmes available on video cassette
4 x 20 minute audio tapes
1 pack containing information leaflets, posters, TV and audio tape notes
4 multiple choice assignments giving feedback

These components provide up to 40 hours home study and involve activities, quizzes, information, and case studies. This may be spread over 3-6 months and in addition to home study, 1-2 hour group meetings are provided each week in Glasgow. A Letter of Course Completion or in Glasgow a Certificate is awarded after submission of the multiple choice assignments.

A typical group might consist of mothers whose children are attending nursery school who meet each week for two hours or so. Such a group could be run by a nursery teacher, a member of the community education staff or occasionally by ex-group members. In between meetings the group members work through the course material and complete feedback questions at home. At each group meeting the issues the students had been studying would be discussed and arrangements would be made for viewing the video cassettes or listening to audio tapes. The feedback questions are sent to a coordinator who records their comments and issues a letter indicating their progress. If there are any difficulties the coordinator can contact the group leader and vica versa.

Scale and duration of the programme
This study (Farnes, 1990) covers a 6 year period from 1981-87 which runs from the first year in which the courses were offered under the collaborative scheme up till the year in which the research was carried out. Beyond this date the courses continue to be provided as part of the ongoing community education provision in Glasgow. The total numbers of students and the number of student/courses (ie. if the same student takes two courses this counts as two student/courses) at the end of each year are as follows:

	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	Total
Students	234	225	310	382	393	515	2059
Student/ courses	235	246	376	591	602	726	2776

Table 1. Student and student/courses form 1982-87.
Data from Department of Education: Glasgow Division, Community Education Service, lists for the presentation of Certificates, 1982-87.

While the figures across the city are not high the participation rates in particular localities vary considerably. For example in one small housing estate the census figures show that there is a population of around 2000, and a total of 190 children under 5. In any year a maximum of roughly a fifth (38) of these would reach the age at which they were eligible for nursery school and there might be up to 38 mothers who could begin courses. In this area there is a very active nursery which only recruits children from the estate. The actual number of new students taking Community Education courses in the nursery each year for the years 1984-6 was: 19, 14, 24. If all these are mothers who have a child who has started nursery during the year this is an extraordinary high rate of participation, being over 60% of this target group in 1986. While these figures fail to take into account that most mothers have more than one child and some do not use the nursery, this shows how on a local level high participation rates are possible.

Who participates?
The programme participants are almost entirely women, only around 5% of students are men. On the basis of a random sample of students who gained a Certificate in 1986 almost all students came from working class backgrounds. Half had left school with no educational qualifications and less than 20% had 5 or more 'O' levels. Around 5% gained professional qualifications (mainly in nursing) and the rest had been employed as unskilled or semi-skilled office, factory or shop workers. When they got married 70% of their husbands were in unskilled or semi-skilled jobs and the rest in skilled manual jobs. Most remained in the same type of work if they continued in employment. The average age when students began their community education course was 31 which ranged from 18 to 46. Almost all had children and 10% had 4 or more.

In terms of two main indicators used to define disadvantage - women who are single parents or whose husbands experience unemployment - approximately half fall into one of these categories. However, none of them are homeless, or have children in care of the local authority and in this sense perhaps are not the poorest of the poor. Nonetheless many have low incomes and are typical of the inhabitants of Glasgow's Areas for Priority Treatment. Irrespective of their family and economic status at least half can be considered as educationally disadvantaged.

Approach to assessing the influence of the courses
This study attempts to assess the role of the courses as a component of the social strategy by examining the characteristics and circumstances of the students who participate, and the influence of the courses on their lives and their communities. The approach adopted involves collecting life histories of a random sample of 60 students who had completed courses two years previously. The life histories were analysed into a set of lifelines for each student showing their multi-dimensional 'careers' in each area of their lives. These included family life, childcare, employment, education, community activities, health, social life, and husbands unemployment. Each of these careers was analysed separately and with reference to their participation in the courses. The analysis identified the place of the course in each career and what happened around the time of the courses and afterwards. Also collected were students views as to the helpfulness of the courses and where students were in each career was related to their comments concerning the helpfulness of the course.

This approach avoids claiming that participation in courses 'causes' changes in peoples' lives, rather it looks at the pattern of changes in each area of their lives and assesses the role of the courses in relation to these changes. For example, if students go onto further education or a community responsibility and say the course helped them it is not being claimed that they would not have done this without the course. It also avoids difficulties with events that happen before the course began and for which the student says the course was helpful. For example, a student might be helped to cope with a separation which occurred six months before the course started. A simple cause and effect analysis would have difficulty with this as events are not supposed to precede causes. By including all events that occur around the time of the course and afterwards and assessing the influence of the courses on these, an overall picture of the dynamics of the students lives and the role of the courses can be arrived at.

What benefits?
The main findings for each area of life are summarised below:

Education
Over half the students went onto other courses after taking one or more OU courses and their educational background did not affect this, but did affect the type of course they choose to go onto. The OU courses provide more help to unqualified students who go onto further education.

Family Life
Students reactions to the courses are influenced by their marital life. Those whose marriages are ending find the courses helpful in this area of their lives.

Childcare
Nearly half the students are involved in the care of children under 4 years old and around three quarters changed what they do with their children as a result of the courses. This compares to less than a third whose children are older. It appears that the help the OU courses provide concerning childcare is systematically related to the stage of their childcare careers in that those in the early stages find the courses more helpful in this area.

Employment
Around 40% take up work after their course and another 20% are working at the time of their course. Where students are in their employment careers (ie. not returned to work, returned or working) influences their reaction to the courses. If work is an active area of their lives or is a new area which enters their lives around the time of the courses then they are more likely to find the courses helpful in getting a job or in their work. Those who return to work after an OU course are also more likely to take up further education.

Husband's Unemployment
There are around 10% of students who get a job and whose husbands become unemployed, and they find the courses particularly helpful in getting work.

Community Activities
Over half the students were involved in community activities or responsibilities before the start of their first OU course and most came to the OU courses in connection with these. Most of the students had become involved around the time of the courses or afterwards and more students took on responsibilities. Nearly half took up their first community activities or responsibilities around this time. Also around half of those who are involved use what they learnt in the OU courses in their community activities or responsibilities. Those who start community activities for the first time and those who have ongoing responsibilities are more likely to use what they learnt. Students who are involved in the community are more likely to take up further education.

Social Life
Irrespective of whether students knew members of the group before the start of the course over half report that participation in the courses led to close friendships.

Health
Whether the OU courses provide general or specific help partly depends on when the students had their health problems, general help from improved

morale and confidence was reported by two thirds of the students and specific help by a further 20% who also had current problems. Nearly 40% report making practical health changes concerning diet, smoking or exercise and most of these have also changed the diets of their children. Almost 60% say they have more patience and are able to cope better with their children. Thus childrens health may be improved by their mothers changing their diet and coping better. Some students also talk about health and diet to other people in the community and through their work.

Events and course help

The table below shows the most and least common areas of life in which change events (mainly starting and activity, having a baby, child starting school; less often stopping an activity) occurred around the time of the courses and afterwards, also shown is how frequently the courses helped in each area:

Area of life	Students experiencing change events % Rank	and course help % Rank
Childcare	72 (1)	73 (2)
Community activities	63 (2)	38 (5)
Education - OU courses	62 (3)	62 (3)
Employment	57 (4.5)	23 (8)
Education - Non-OU courses	57 (4.5)	32 (7)
Social network	55 (6)	58 (4)
Health	50 (7)	83 (1)
Husbands unemployment	33 (8)	na
Marriage	17 (9)	35 (6)

Table 2. Frequency of change events and course help in each area of life.

The first column shows that 72% students experienced events in the childcare area of their life during this time. As might be expected of women in this age group most events centre on this area, followed community activities then by education (more OU courses), then employment and non-OU courses. Husbands unemployment events are experienced by 33% and finally 17% of students have an event in the marriage area (eg. separation, second marriage).

The second column shows that the courses provided most help in the health area, 83% received general or specific help concerning their mental or physical health. The courses contribute most to this and the childcare area which are the subjects of many of the courses. Obviously the favourable reception of one OU course helps with the decision to take another and for this sample this is a popular direction to go in. Making close friends through the course is an important outcome and contributes to students social networks.

Number of events and areas of course help

Irrespective of the particular areas, a key question is whether there is a relationship between the number of areas in which a student experienced changes and the number of areas that the courses were helpful. This was tested by correlating the number of areas of change and the number of areas of course help across all students. This gives a correlation of 0.66 (Pearson's Product Moment Correlation) which is highly significant ($p<0.001$). This suggests that there is a close relationship between the number of events a

student experiences and the helpfulness of the courses. *Students who have more areas of change in their lives around the time of the courses report that the courses are helpful in more areas than those with fewer areas of change, and students with few areas of change report little reaction to the courses.*

The table below shows the number of events experienced and the number of areas in which the courses were helpful. Each student identification number is located in the box corresponding to the number of events and course help.

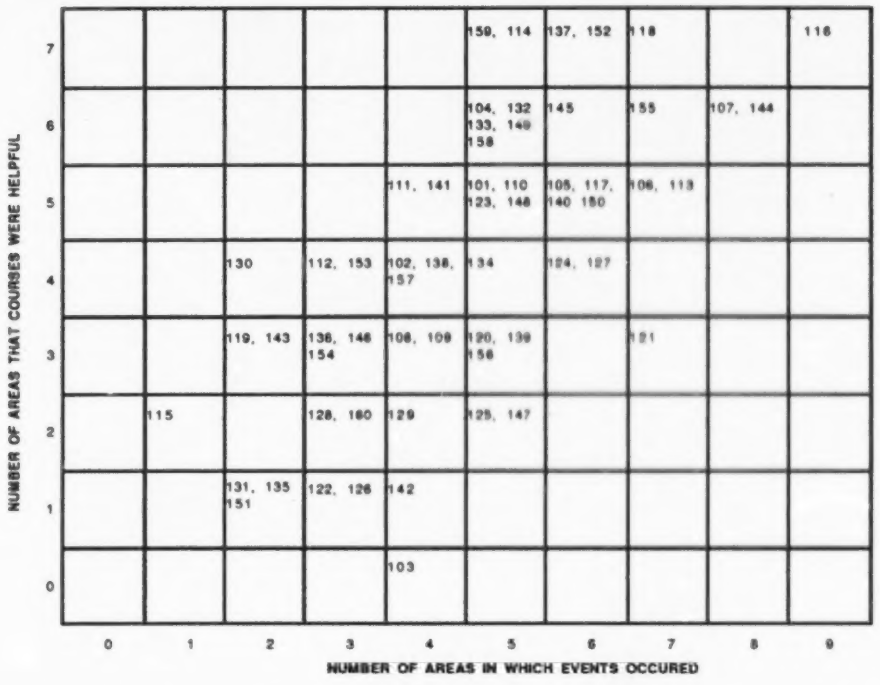

Fig 4. The relationship between the number of events experienced and course helpfulness.

Who benefits?
Students who had experienced family instability (ie. due to marital breakdown) and economic instability (ie. due to husbands unemployment or separation) have on average changes in more areas of their lives. Because of the relationship between events and course help, *students with family and economic instability; followed by those with economic instability have more changes and therefore find the courses more helpful than those whose lives are stable.*

Those who have had stability are less likely to experience health problems, to be helped to get a job, and make least use of what they learnt in their community activities. Those who experienced economic instability on its own are more likely to be helped to get a job, are least likely to go onto further education and a high proportion have health problems. The group who experienced family and economic instability are more likely to go onto further education, have health problems, start work and some are helped by the course to get a job and use what they learn in their community activities.

Thus helpfulness in a particular area may depend on the type of instability students have experienced - economic instability is linked to help in getting a job; family and economic instability to help in going on to further education and using what they learnt in community activities.

Who else benefits?

Students' children also benefit both in terms of their relationship with their mother and their health, particularly healthier eating. Second in importance to childcare are the community activities the students are involved in and the help the courses provide for these. Many students help in community organisations and take on responsibilities which involve ensuring that resources and facilities are provided. Others work for caring agencies in the community and the courses help them in their work. Also social networks are strengthened through the courses and students talk to other people encouraging their participation and in helping them with problems they learnt about in their groups. In these ways the courses contribute to the objectives of the social strategy and particularly help those who are most disadvantaged to make changes in their own lives, in their families and communities.

Almost all the community activities and responsibilities that students are involved with are related to maintaining or developing services which benefit both themselves and others. Being a member of a mother and toddler group involves making a personal contribution as well as increasing the groups viability and benefiting the children. Helping in playgroup, play schemes and children's clubs provides a service for other parents and their children. Taking responsibility on committees assists in the organisation and leadership needed to sustain and improve community facilities, including pre-5 services, schools, children's groups, tenants groups, caring for the elderly, welfare groups and so on. In addition to the provision of community services, many groups are involved in articulating needs and putting pressure on the authorities for improvements and additional resources. The courses assist in this by encouraging people to become involved and in developing their knowledge and skills which can be applied in community activities and responsibilities. The aims of the social strategy include strengthening the social infrastructure of the communities and this case study has illustrated the role of the OU courses in social and community development. No doubt many of these activities would continue if there were no OU courses, but the courses provide opportunities of a particular kind for developing friendships, learning social skills, acquiring knowledge about the needs of children and how to bring about changes in the community.

Costs

This case study has shown the complexity of the interagency links between the Open University and the Regional Council, with central government and other agencies. Many of the links involve a transfer of resources: grant funding is provided for course production, courses are purchased using funds from the Glasgow Community Education Service, the Scottish Health Education Group and elsewhere. The costs of group leaders are often hidden as many carry out this work as part of regular duties, eg. as a nursery head. Overhead costs for the Open University are not included in full, and facility costs connected with the places where groups meet are not identified. Where courses are provided in bulk there are savings on handling costs and in Glasgow courses are frequently recycled many times. For illustrative purposes the production and direct student costs for a typical course are given at current (1990) prices, bearing in mind that the courses are available nationally, fees are paid by students who study independently and print runs are usually geared to a 5 year supply.

Production	
Fixed costs	
Staff - 2.5 people over 2 years at average employers cost of £20k per year each	£100k
TV programmes - 4 x £15k each	£60k
Print etc.	£40k
Total fixed cost	£200k
Variable costs	
Print - 10,000 at £5 each	£50k
Presentation, maintenance, packing, postage - 10,000 at £5 each	£50k
Total variable costs	£100k
Direct cost per student/per course	
Learning materials (Fixed + variable costs divided by 10,000 students)	£30
Group leader at 2 hours per week for 16 weeks at £10 per hour, average 8 students (£320/8)	£40
Coordination, supply of courses, assignment marking etc 0.75 person/year at £21k per year for 700 student/courses total	£30
Total cost per student	£100
Cost per hour (40 hours home study + 32 hours group learning = 72 hours total)	£1.40

Potential

This study shows that the use of distance learning courses in non-formal community education is successful in attracting, at a reasonable cost per student, many who are disadvantaged. Participation leads to improvements in morale, strengthened social networks and taking up opportunities for further education, employment and community activities. In other words it appears that these courses are successful in contributing to the objectives of the social strategy.

The example of one estate showed that high participation rates for the main target groups are possible. This suggests that student interest exists and in theory this rate could be achieved across the city. There are approximately 10,000 nursery school places in Glasgow, and as children can spend up to two years in nursery school, there are at least 5,000 mothers whose children start each year. If half of these became involved in courses then this would increase the student total by a factor of five. Also as only half the current students are based in nursery schools it might be possible to expand the remaining number by a similar amount. Thus instead of 500 or so students the potential could be as many as 5,000 per year.

If the courses are successful and there appears to be considerable potential why are the numbers participating not greater?

The following might be limiting factors in Glasgow:

1) there is no clear cut policy objectives regarding participation targets.
2) more coordination is needed between agencies and staff involved in the Social Strategy (eg. community development, health services).
3) the amount of group leading that can be done on the margins of regular work, and the additional costs of employing group leaders.
4) the recurrent expenditure required for purchasing course material.
5) coordination capacity, including distribution of material; marking of

assignments; identification, supervision and support of group leaders.

Whether more use could be made of the OU courses and greater benefits for students and their communities in Glasgow could be achieved if there was more interagency coordination remains a key question. A recent review of the Social Strategy points out that the traditional local authority machinery is not right 'for ensuring that power, influence and resources of the Council are used to bring about social change in line with our corporate, political objectives.' (SRC, 1987: 12).

Not only is there potential for expansion in Glasgow, it is likely that potential also exists in other cities in Britain. However, the Open University's failure to achieve similar schemes anywhere else in spite of repeated attempts raises questions about the particular conditions in Glasgow. No other cities in Britain have the same political commitment to tackling deprivation, but neither do they have such enormous problems. Also the organisation of community education in Scotland underwent major changes following the Alexander Report (HMSO, 1975) and emerged as a stronger service compared to elsewhere in Britain where this work has been more fragmentary.

In summary, the factors which may have prevented this potential being realised in other cities may include:

1) lack of political will by central and local government.
2) no policy initiatives involving positive discrimination for disadvantaged areas and community participation.
3) no powerful individuals with personal stake in collaborative schemes.
4) lack of interagency coordination of community services.
5) no integrated community education service, a fragmentary approach to adult education, few staff and resources.
6) lack of awareness of distance teaching resources and benefits by agency staff and potential students.
7) insufficient community infrastructure - nursery schools, parents rooms in schools, community centres.
8) declining community activities and opportunities.
9) less extensive and less deprived housing estates/communities compared to Glasgow.

There are general difficulties in introducing or expanding the use of distance education for non-formal learning:

1) the need for vertical and horizontal coordination of policies which are understood and supported at all levels.
2) high set-up costs for user agencies, including coordination, training, purchase of learning materials, recruiting students etc.
3) even with distance learning there are substantial variable costs which limit expansion.
4) step functions also limit expansion, considerable extra resources may be needed to expand beyond a particular size.
5) limits to what can be done at the margins of employees time.
6) problems in recruiting students and preventing high drop out.
7) maintenance of the quality of learning both at home and in groups.
8) range and level of courses might be insufficient but too great a range may make group formation difficult.
9) cultural and social factors may make group learning difficult, individuals may prefer to study on their own.

Conclusion

Limited success in providing distance teaching for non-formal community education has been achieved through collaboration between the Open University, Strathclyde Regional Council and other agencies. This has been achieved against a background of declining employment and increasing poverty, while the social strategy has expanded educational and community opportunities. The employment opportunities for women have declined less than those for males and the courses may have improved students competitive position. The courses have helped students take advantage of the expanding community and social opportunities for their own benefit and for the benefit of others.

The courses are successful in attracting disadvantaged students and provide practical help particularly to those who experienced family and economic instability. The participation rates achieved in certain areas suggest that there is scope for substantial expansion. Further policy development is needed involving targets and more effective coordination across community services. However, the failure to establish similar collaborative schemes in any other city in Britain points to special factors in Glasgow which are not replicated elsewhere and to general difficulties associated with the introduction and expansion of distance teaching in non-formal community education.

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